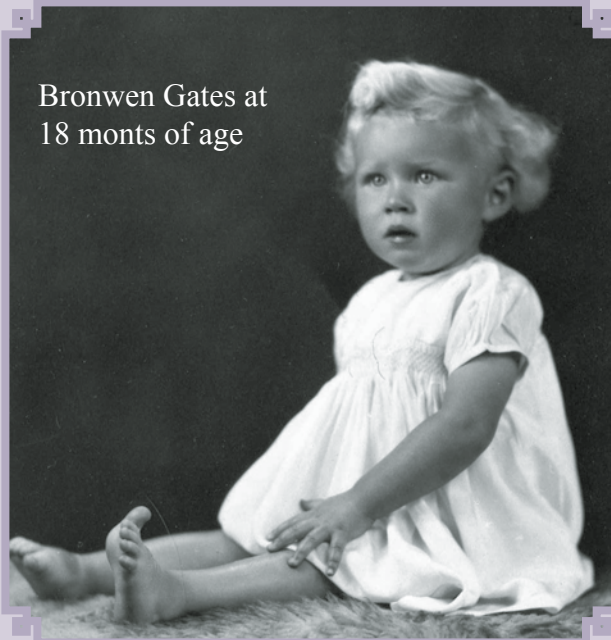


Occupy Yourself



By Bronwen Gates

I spent a lot of time out of my body as a child. This was often because my body didn't seem like a safe and comfortable place to be. But there was also the choice to spend time out of body, visiting the expanded world I experienced in the magical reality reached through my imagination, the more-real world that I longed to be able to make others know and see.



I recall the time I watched from above as my charred diapers and the burned skin on my legs were removed after I sat on the fire. The story was that it was an accident, that I walked over and sat on the open coal fire in the kitchen that was the heat source in our home. But it has always been curious to me why I would 'sit on the fire.' How could something that was designed to be as wonderful and delicious as embodiment have become such a painful and misunderstood experience?

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I had never forgotten the pain when I came back into my body, just one of the sources of the night terrors that plagued my childhood well into my twenties. Now that I have reached the age of that Future Self, she who cradled this toddler in love's embrace during her out of body experience, there is a reconnection through the continuum of time-space. All the pain my action caused me and my parents is released, and the pain is done; the circle is complete. I had wanted to return to my remembered home in Faerie through the fire's portal, but the portal was blocked, and fire was not the answer. Now I choose to let what happened be indeed an 'accident' of profound design, to bring me home to myself.

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This is not, of course, the first time a Future Self has reconnected with a younger self, nor will it be the last. Each encounter opens me to a depth of wisdom and compassion that may have been glimpsed earlier, and can become the domain of habitation in our elder years. Now after all these years of seeking answers, I understand more of the 'voices' internal to myself. I understand the role that shame can play, embedded as aberrant chemistry even before birth. In my commitment to consciously confront the inner predator, I am able to offer maps to others in their quest for freedom.

Now that I can easily visit my child's world with her, I can show her all the gifts she received and the fun she had, when previously the unhealed wounds overrode all other memory. Such is the power of pain-accompanied memoir; if we can detach the pain-imprint and restore flow to our energy system, we can remember many individual and collective experiences of feeling pleasure and contentment, and experience an unshakable sense of well-being that wells up like an eternal spring. This to me is the Fountain of Youth.

Perhaps the movement we most need now is the "Occupy Yourself" movement, when we truly inhabit the magnificent interactive domain of nature that is for each of us the body

Old age is not meant to be a reversion to the unmet needs of childhood, but a re-opening to the wonder and pleasure that is present in every childhood and available at deeper and deeper levels as we expand our reverence for the Gift of Life. I am confident that as our perception and perspective expand, new ways of being will emerge.

Perhaps the movement we most need now is the "Occupy Yourself" movement, when we truly inhabit the magnificent interactive domain of nature that is for each of us the body: a world of infinite mystery and delight when we learn to parse its messages, and unlock the inner portals of profound change.

And so it is.



Bronwen Gates is a Joy Coach, committed to helping people experience more joy in their lives.



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